

Alive And Remain

Three In One: Volume II

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1 Thessalonians 4:17, *“Then we which are **alive and remain** shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.”*

[1]

The only difference between the Hebrews and the Egyptians on the night of the first passover was the blood of the lamb sprinkled on the doorposts of the homes of the Hebrews.

It will serve us well to remember the difference between an overcomer in Christ is the blood of the Lamb. This blood of the Lamb represents all of what the Lord Jesus accomplished. He purchased us in his own blood, and in this transaction obtained for us forgiveness of sins, deliverance from self, sin, the world, and the devil. He saved us from death and hell. There are a multitude of other things one can list which Christ did at Calvary. He said, “It is finished.” (John 19:30)

Many believe Jesus forgives their sins but for one reason or another do not move beyond this to take hold upon all God’s grace provides through the finished work of Christ.

Only God knows if a person is an overcomer. Just as in the days of Elijah when God set aside 7,000 men who were alive and remained and did not bow the knee to Baal, so the Lord also has a remnant today. We are alive and we remain. When the Lord Jesus returns there will be a remnant who are still alive and remain who are looking for that blessed hope of the return of the Lord Jesus.

[2]

In the household of faith there are brothers of the flesh, and there are brothers of the Spirit.

The first example in the Bible where we see this principle is in the history of Cain and Abel. God did not accept Cain’s offering because it was not given according to faith.

Cain did not have the eyes of faith to see God's order. No doubt Adam explained to them that without shedding of blood is no remission of sin. God did not accept Cain's offering. However, Abel did offer an acceptable sacrifice to God, proving he was a righteous man. Abel had eyes to see God's order and government.

Out of anger and malice towards God Cain murdered Abel. Probably he killed Abel the same way he saw lambs being offered, by cutting his throat. This was his way of slapping God in the face with this business of a blood sacrifice. He offered God his brother's blood. That blood cried out to God from the earth for vengeance.

In this first example, we see the difference between those who are of the flesh and those who are of the Spirit. These two brothers were of one household, the house of Adam and Eve.

In the case of Cain and Abel the motive for murder could only have been God's preference and affirmation of Abel against Cain. This is all it takes for some people to carry out murder. All that is needed is envy, and a person can be filled with murder. Cain no doubt thought he should receive special treatment or preference because he was the first born. However, just to make a point, it seems the Lord on multiple occasions in the Bible did not choose the first born in families. He would choose the least likely in a family, men such as David, Gideon, Jacob, and Isaac. The Lord does not think like we do. His ways are higher than ours. (Isaiah 55:8).

[3]

In this history of Abraham and Lot their distinction is not obvious at first. They both were of the house of Terah. Here we see again the Lord presents us with the account of two men who were of one house, and yet as we read their history we see one is of the flesh and the other is of the Spirit.

As it usually is in life, the division between Lot and Abraham came as a result of strife over possessions. Abraham did not strive with Lot directly, but the servants in his household did strive with those in Lot's household.

As a result Abraham proposed they go different ways in order to keep the peace between them.

Abraham was a gracious man and let Lot choose whatever he thought was the best of the green pastures. As a result, Lot chose what he thought was best for himself and pitched his tent towards Sodom. There are many lessons we could learn from observing Lot's choice and the consequences which followed. However, I want to press on to list the differences between Lot and Abraham. This is my purpose: to see the difference between the brother of the flesh and the brother of the Spirit.

The main difference between these brothers was that Abraham received his instructions directly from the Lord himself. Lot must have known this because he followed Abraham all the way to Canaan. There is no indication Lot ever heard from God or received a word

from the Lord. However, he was happy enough to go along with Abraham and to enjoy the Lord's blessings which were upon Abraham. No doubt the Lord blessed Lot for the sake of Abraham. It was these very material blessings which caused Lot to separate from Abraham.

This principle holds true in nations as well. Many times God blesses a nation because of the remnant of believers in that country. However, as time goes on, the unbeliever whose material blessings give him the time to corrupt himself, slowly but surely separates himself from the remnant in principle, word, action, and attitude. They pitch their tent toward Sodom. I would say America is even beyond this point, and is now surrounded by Sodom and is sitting on the eve of destruction.

We are at a point in America where God is calling prophets to intercede and warn Americans of God's judgment which is appearing. This judgment is already happening in America, but it is like moths who eat away in secret without anyone noticing until the garment is so hole ridden it can no longer be worn.

We see in scripture there is a concentration of prophetic voices during the decline of Israel during the destruction of the nation and the exile to Assyria and Babylon.

Another aspect of difference between Lot and Abraham is where they end up. Lot ends up in the congregation of the dead. (Proverbs 21:16). Abraham kept moving through the land as a stranger and as a pilgrim. He did not make a house or a name for himself, but lived in tents and kept his focus on the Lord.

In order for Lot to become a citizen of Sodom he must have made agreements with that world system. Lot was driven by the desire for provision and so naturally sought position and prestige in that community. The sodomites accused Lot of desiring to be a judge over them. This was probably a true accusation.

The third difference I see in these brothers is in the end Lot was a prey to the enemy. He was carried away captive in time of war and rescued by Abraham. Lot was a prisoner of war, and Abraham was like Rambo to the rescue. He might have died in Sodom when fire fell from heaven if Abraham had not interceded and prayed for his deliverance from God's wrath.

What was the legacy of Lot? Two daughters who committed incest with him and initiated evil nations who later opposed and fought against Israel.

As days turn into weeks and months and then years the separation only becomes wider and deeper. Amos 3:3, "Can two walk together, except they be agreed?"

[4]

Ishmael and Isaac are a clear example of this contrast of two in one house: one brother of the flesh, one brother of the Spirit.

Paul in the book of Galatians makes it clear there is a distinction between Ishmael and Isaac. He uses Isaac as the example of God's promise inherited by faith. This is the brother of the Spirit. Ishmael is associated with the shadow of the law, Hagar, and bondage. After Christ was risen, the Jewish religious ordinances were done away. All of these were a shadow pointing to Christ. Now we have Christ and we no longer need these Jewish religious ordinances. Paul associates Ishmael and Hagar with this dead religion which brings people into slavery and into bondage.

Ishmael came from Abraham and Sarah's impatience. This child born from the bond woman Hagar was a child born out of unbelief inspired by the impatience of Sarah and Abraham. They both suffered because of their lack of patience, not to mention all of the hardship and suffering they caused to Hagar and Ishmael.

The Lord took care of Hagar and Ishmael even after he told Abraham to send them away. Why did God do this? Why didn't he just let them die in the desert? Because Ishmael was still Abraham's son. God not only saved Ishmael but blessed him and multiplied him into nations. However, Ishmael did not receive God's promise and was not a man of the Spirit.

Remember God does bless materially and physically these brothers of the flesh. They do not walk in faith and do not inherit the kingdom of God. One difference we can see in Hagar and Ishmael is they despised those over them and were mockers. When Hagar became pregnant she despised Sarah. She thought she was better than her mistress. This is the attitude of the flesh. This is a pride and arrogance that exalts itself despite the reality of her actual position in that family. We also see that Ishmael mocked Isaac during a festival held when Isaac was weaned. Sarah saw this mocking from Ishmael and it motivated her to persuade Abraham to send Hagar and Ishmael away.

Psalm 1:1, "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful."

[5]

Jacob and Esau were the two sons of Isaac and Rebekah. Once again we can see in this example the contrast between two brothers in one house. One brother is of the flesh and the other one is of the Spirit.

The reason I am examining each of these examples is to make a point. Sooner or later there will come a time when there will be one last house with a brother of the flesh and a brother of the Spirit.

Luke 17:36, "Two men shall be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left."

This also parallels the parable of the ten virgins in Matthew chapter 25.

What were the characteristics which separated Esau and Jacob? I think it is significant such attention to detail is preserved in the accounts describing the physical appearances

and disposition of the personalities of these brothers. The whole point here is to underline and draw attention to their differences.

One difference is the impatience of Esau and his focus on his immediate needs and desires. This is demonstrated in the account when Esau sold his birthright for a bowl of soup. Esau despised his birthright. His birthright included the privilege of being born the eldest. He was the first born in Isaac's house. According to the order of a natural man he was first, but Jacob maneuvered his brother into a position which exposed Esau's selfishness. A selfish man disqualifies himself from being a leader.

Another clear sign Esau was of the flesh was he consoled himself with the thought of murdering his brother. Scripture makes it clear Esau had murder in his heart. This is the reason Rebekah persuaded Isaac to send Jacob away so Esau would not kill Jacob.

A third sign Esau was of the flesh and not of the Spirit his marriage to pagan women in Canaan. He showed he was not of faith because he was drawn to unbelieving pagan women and yoked himself together with these women.

Making agreements with unbelievers, hatred, murder, and selfishness were chief characteristics in Esau. It is obvious God's hand was not on this man.

In what way did Jacob show he was the brother of the Spirit? First and foremost, because God spoke to him. Jacob heard God's voice. He that is of God hears God's words. He had visions and revelations from God.

When Jacob served Laban for Rachel and Leah he showed he was not a selfish man. He was willing to submit to others and to sacrifice for many years.

The third way we see Jacob was the brother of the Spirit is that he was transformed. He did not stay Jacob, but was changed by God into Israel.

Also, we see at the end of Israel's life he had true spiritual vision in his blessings upon Ephraim, Manasseh, and upon the sons of Israel.

[6] Moses and the burning bush.

My goal in looking at biblical history is to see how God sets apart a remnant. In Moses we see God's selection of one man, in a similar way to when he called out Abraham.

In the account of the bush the Lord appears as a bush on fire but is not consumed. Moses turned aside to see this unusual sight, and when God saw Moses turned aside he called to him out of the bush: "Moses, Moses". (Exodus 3:4)

The purpose in God appearing to Moses was not for the sake of Moses alone, but because the Lord had a larger goal in mind. This goal was to bring his people out of Egypt. To make sure Israel would be ready to leave the Lord allowed them to suffer under Pharaoh in Egypt. There are many lessons here but we only want to take note that when God

called Moses he spoke his name. After he called Moses by name he then revealed his name to Moses: “I Am That I Am”. (Exodus 3:14)

Those in the remnant called out of the world and out of dead religion are those who have fellowship with the living God. They hear God’s voice and move in the fear of God to obey his voice and his words.

One characteristic of the remnant, therefore, is an unusual sense of the present reality of the person of the Lord Jesus. Jesus said his sheep hear his voice and follow him. They do not follow the voice of strangers. (John 10:27)

When you see someone who claims to be a Christian following the voice of the stranger you should be careful with this person. Be careful not to make agreements with someone who obviously does not have discernment to know the difference between the shepherd and a hireling. (2 Corinthians 6:14-18). “Go from the presence of a foolish man when thou perceivest not in him the lips of knowledge.” (Proverbs 14:7)

Another characteristic Moses displayed in this account is humility. The forty years on the backside of the desert changed this once proud prince of Egypt. He now asks God, “Who am I?” (Exodus 3:11)

We can ask this, but is it important we get an answer? God is sovereign. The Lord tells Moses he will be with him. It is enough. This is all we need to know. The Lord will be with us. He is the same yesterday, today, and forever. (Hebrews 13:8)

[7] A table in the wilderness.

We see in the account of Moses and the burning bush the characteristics of a remnant overcomer.

Israel in the wilderness is an example of a brother in the flesh. Israel demonstrated this flesh nature through unbelief and challenging God in regard to provision.

A result of unbelief was an entire generation of Israel came out of Egypt and died in the wilderness. They all died in the wilderness except for Joshua and Caleb and the children born after God pronounced judgment.

Of the twelve spies who surveyed the promised land only Joshua and Caleb had spiritual eyes of faith. All the others saw with eyes of unbelief.

Along with unbelief the brother of the flesh has his mind on provision. His mind is set on earthly things. He is like Esau who sold his birthright for a bowl of soup. Jesus said Gentiles are always thinking about what they will eat, what they will wear. Their mind is completely set on provision, whether this is food or clothing or shelter. (Matthew 6:31-33)

Let me say clearly: the overcomer is not materialistic. The overcomer experienced the

death of the cross and is delivered from the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. I don't mean he is above temptation. The overcomer's goal and purpose is not things! The overcomer desires the presence of the Lord Jesus above all things.

These men prove themselves to be of the flesh when they murmur against God and challenge God to spread a table for them in the wilderness. (Psalm 78:19)

How much different is the man of faith in Psalm 23 who proclaims, "you spread a table before me in the presence of my enemies."

Let us be men of faith and proclaim with David that God is our provider. The Lord is our provision, he is our protector, and he is our prize. We have everything we need in the Lord Jesus Christ.

[8] Saul and David.

Now I want to leap forward in the history of Israel and consider another contrast between a brother in the flesh and a brother in the Spirit. Remember, the purpose in these comparisons is to prove there is a real principle of a pair in one house. These pairs represent a contrast between the flesh and the Spirit.

Saul was demanded by the people of Israel. In a parallel manner, the antichrist will rise to power at the demand of the world. As the prophet Samuel anointed Saul at God's command, so in the last days a false prophet will accompany the man of sin at the will of Satan.

In many ways Saul parallels the antichrist. He foreshadows this dark king who will rise out of the nations.

One of the saddest things, I think, Saul ever did was when he murdered the priests of the Lord. Saul went from being disobedient to Samuel's command, to becoming a murderous butcher. I can see how the seed of these murders was always there in Saul, hating, growing, evolving. People do not become maniacs over night. They evolve into the evil despots we see on the news.

Saul proved he was of the flesh through impatience, through insincerity, through disobedience, through rebellion. Samuel told him, Rebellion as the sin of witchcraft. (1 Samuel 15:3) This we can see clearly manifested in the end of Saul's life. the night before he died he was consulting a witch. (1 Samuel 28:7)

The main principle operating in Saul which made him a man of the flesh was rebellion. It was not unbelief or selfishness. Saul was rebellious and stubborn. These characteristics drove him to make an agreement with a witch before he died.

Not only was Saul rebellious but he was murderous. He tried many times to kill David and he murdered the priests of the Lord.

Saul's sins were so bad there was a drought and famine during the reign of King David stemming from the sins of Saul. David cleaned up Saul's mess by allowing the Gibeonites to execute seven of Saul's descendants.

What were some of David's characteristics which made him a brother of the Spirit?

Primarily this: when he was anointed by Samuel the Holy Spirit came upon David from that day forward.

Some could even argue some of David's sins were as bad or worse than Saul. David took a man's wife and then had him killed purposely while in battle.

David was punished by God for these crimes, and yet there is a different heart and attitude with King David.

One thing which set David apart was he learned obedience through the things he suffered. Psalms 119:71, "It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn thy statutes."

David showed humility and restraint towards his enemies. When he was being cursed by Shimei David did not retaliate but he committed judgment into the hands of the Lord. (2 Samuel 16:5-13)

Also, we see a clear difference in the way David maintained the throne. When his son rose up against him to take the throne David stepped aside and allowed God to deliver him and restore him to the throne. (2 Samuel 15:13-17)

Another trait I see in David is when he failed God he humbled himself, confessed his sin, and repented of his sins. Psalm 51 is a good example of a prayer of repentance which David wrote.

[9]

I think we can see from these examples there is a pattern in the bible of contrasting a pair, with one of the pair representing the flesh and the other one representing the Spirit.

The point of these examples is in every house of God there is a remnant of true believers who walk in the Spirit and are righteous by faith in God. These brothers believe God and it is accounted to them as righteousness. These men are not always perfect, but they know God, they fear God, and they love God. Ultimately they show who they are by their actions of faith, courage, humility, and love.

In these last days we also have a remnant of Christians who believe in the Lord and hear the voice of the Lord. These brothers move in the Spirit of the Lord; they receive revelation from the Lord; they are obedient to the heavenly vision.

In the garden of Gethsemane the Lord said to the disciples to watch and to pray. The

spirit indeed is willing but the flesh is weak.

Paul said in 1 Thessalonians 5:6, "Therefore let us not sleep, as do others, but let us watch and be sober"

There is a wave of spiritual sleepiness and apathy in the church today. There will only be a small minority who hear this message and wake up.

Not every person calling himself a Christian is caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, but some are left behind to endure the tribulation. "Two will be in the field, one will be taken and the other left." These two in the field represent the brother of the flesh and the brother of the Spirit. The brother of the Spirit will be taken up to the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. The brother in the flesh is left behind to make a choice of whether they will be an overcomer during the tribulation or take the mark of the beast. Either way means death. One is physical death, the other is physical and spiritual death. The Lord makes a special promise to overcomers in the tribulation that they will not be hurt by the second death. (Revelation 2:11)

Paul tells Timothy in a great house there are common vessels and there are vessels of honour. There are two brothers today in God's house. (2 Timothy 2:20-21).

There is the brother feeding his flesh and is spiritually apathetic. The other brother is walking in the Spirit, hearing God's voice, and getting ready for the return of the Lord.

[10] The Ten Virgins.

In Matthew 25 Jesus communicates the parable of the ten virgins. In the context of the preceding chapter and also this chapter we have in view the context of the last days, the end times, and the day of the Lord.

As we have discussed already, there is a biblical precedent and a principle throughout scripture of a pair that contrasts a brother of the flesh with a brother of the Spirit. These brothers both are in the household of faith.

This brings us to the parable of the ten virgins. This is describing a household, which is labeled "virgins". The household is divided into two parts: the wise and the foolish. The only discrepancy between them which we can see besides one called foolish and the other called wise is what they brought with them while waiting for the return of their master. Also, the very fact this parable is in the context of the return of a master clearly shows this pertains to the day of the Lord and the return of the Lord Jesus.

We don't want to ponder on what one group possessed versus what the other group possessed. However, for my purpose, I only want to demonstrate again we have a pair, in this example a pair of five foolish and five wise virgins. Only one group went with the master when he returned. This is a dire warning to the church we live in today.

As we can see throughout all of scripture the real difference in these groups is that one is

of the flesh and one is of the Spirit.

When they were awakened from sleep one group went with the master into a time of celebration but the foolish virgins were shut out.

As modern believers do we tend to look at faith from the viewpoint of people who are unsaved or Christian? It seems to me the real message seen throughout the Bible is the difference between religious people and true believers. Jesus spent much time ministering to the unsaved masses, but the part of the gospels I think really applies to us today is the interactions Jesus had with the religious people.

Most of what people think of as the church, the outward structure, organization, and buildings belong more to the world system than it does to the bride of Christ. They are Christian in name only. They are the foolish virgins with lamps which will extinguish and go out before the Master returns.

[11] Sleeping.

In Genesis we can read the account of how God put Adam into a deep sleep before bringing forth his bride Eve out of his side.

In a similar manner, the body of Christ is asleep in the last days so God can bring out a bride for the Lord Jesus Christ.

The church sleeps! This sleeping started the same night Jesus was betrayed in the garden. Jesus kept asking them to wake up and pray. He told them the spirit is willing but the flesh is weak.

In the last days there is also a deep sleep upon the church. Paul described it as a great falling away, a great apostasy. Many people who thought they were Christians will be deceived and put to sleep by a host of seducing evil spirits. In these last days there is more religious delusion and deception than ever before in history. A lot of it is propagated over the internet.

This is a kind of supernatural sleepiness. However, despite this, there are those who watch and pray and are not asleep. They are watching, praying, and it is these who are hearing God's voice. These are those who will hear the shout from heaven, the voice of the archangel, and the trump of God.

We are exhorted over and over by the Lord and the apostles not to sleep but to watch and to pray.

I think there will only be a small minority who will heed this call to watch and pray in this last hour. Most people are asleep in front of the TV, or they are drinking alcohol, or they are consumed with anxiety and worry over the cares of life.

Luke 21:34-36, "And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged

with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares. For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth. Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man."

The remnant in these last days must get shut in with God. They need to clear their desk of all idols and all distractions. Get the Bible and start praying and asking God to fill you with the Holy Spirit.

I'm saying if a man considers himself a Christian and enjoys drinking alcohol, or who is looking at porn on the internet, or wastes hours and hours on entertainment—I'm saying right now this man will be left behind when Jesus returns. Ephesians 5:5, "For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God."

[12]

I am not saying in this book people in the household of faith left behind when Jesus calls us to meet him in the air are not Christians. I'm not saying people don't know about Jesus, but the problem is Jesus does not know who they are. (Matthew 7:22-23)

This is a difficult question to answer, because when we look at the lives of those who are of the flesh in the house of faith it seems like from history they just get worse and worse.

Cain got bad quick. It is uncertain what Ishmael ended up like. Esau got worse, and his descendants became the enemies of Israel. We know Saul ended up committing suicide. What happened to the foolish virgins? Matthew 25:12, "But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not."

But I do think it is possible some of those left behind wake up after the church is taken out, and they realize what happened, and then they truly give their hearts and lives over to the Lord Jesus. Reading the book of Revelation clearly shows there are saints who endure through the time of the tribulation on earth.

If there was ever a message we need to hear in these last days before the return of Christ it is this message of becoming an overcomer, a member of the remnant, one who is a part of the bride of Christ called out of the sleeping church.

[13] Many are called. Few are chosen.

Luke 21:36, "Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man."

We should try to see and understand that the gospel goes out to everyone. The Lord invites everyone to believe on his name and receive eternal life.

What we see here, however, is specifically dealing with a time in history when we are

exhorted to pray always that we may be accounted worthy to escape something that is coming upon the world. We should pray that we should be counted worthy.

I am not suggesting that having begun by faith we now turn to self effort in order to make ourselves holier than other people. This is not the way and cheapens what has already been accomplished for us by the Lord Jesus. Just as we received Christ Jesus we are to also walk in him. How did we receive the Lord? By faith. By faith alone did we believe on the Lord Jesus and received forgiveness of sins.

The problem is, people are ignorant (because of ignorant preachers) that there is much more Christ has done for us!

Many are called. Many people walk up the aisle of some church and pray with some man to receive forgiveness of sins.

But what then? Do they continue to grow in the grace and in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ? If they are relying on that preacher, it is doubtful they will ever make any further progress than knowing their sins are forgiven. Why is this? Because next Sunday that preacher is still preaching the same message on the “A,B,C’s” of getting saved.

A man will actually have to leave the church building and search high and low to hear a gospel which shows him or teaches him he can walk in victory over his own self, sin, the world, and the devil.

This is why many are called but few are chosen. Only a minority of people shut themselves in with God until they can hear God’s voice speaking to them. They are not willing to do the hard work of believing everything the word of God says.

They are very comfortable with their bible doctrines and traditions of men which are handed down to them from one generation to the next.

But things are different now. Things are no longer the same in this present generation. We have people walking around on every side who are demon possessed and filled with murder. Children are killing each other in schools. We need to wake up to the day that we are living in, yet not to be afraid, but so we can draw near to God. The word of God promises if we draw near to him then he will draw near to us.

The main difference between the called and the chosen is this: the chosen hear God’s voice. They can hear the voice of the Lord and are accountable directly to the Lord Jesus.

Do not let any man stand between you and Jesus. I am weak in this regard. I have many times followed a man with a strong personality who led me away from God’s gift and calling on my life. Listen to the Lord. When God speaks to you it is possible you might get confirmation from a man but I believe the Lord prefers to deal with us directly.

Many people I respect advocate getting man’s input into God’s direction for our lives. I

say if God really speaks to you then you do not need men's confirmation. A sign of weak faith is looking for approval from man.

I can tell you how you can be sure God is talking to you. His voice will absolutely change your life and not for the worse. You will fear God, and will live a holy pure life. You will over night lose interest in things like entertainment that waste your time. You will be very earnest in seeking the Lord and will want to hear him speak to you again.

If you are still dabbling in compromise, you have not heard from God and will need someone to hold your hand and be accountable to someone.

[14] The Remnant.

I hope in this small book I have convinced you how dangerous it is to take Christ's name and yet continue to walk in the flesh. I hope you understand when you waste your life indulging in the flesh you are gambling with your kingdom inheritance.

Perhaps you have heard of people who gambled away all of their life savings or their retirement. What I'm talking about is a much bigger and greater risk than even your entire life savings.

I'm talking about your eternal inheritance!

Let's turn our hearts to the Lord Jesus now and pray for revival in our families and in the church. Amen.

[15] The Flesh Versus The Spirit

Paul outlines the symptoms of a man who walks in the flesh versus the man who walks according to the Spirit. I would like to take some time here to meditate on these verses and understand what these symptoms are.

Galatians 5:19-24, "Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts."

I was surprised at the definitions of some of these works of the flesh. Some are fairly self explanatory. One of these which was a surprise to me was "variance", and also "emulations".

According to Webster's dictionary the word "variance" here is similar to variable. This is someone who is always changing their mind. It can also be someone who knows their

own mind but constantly makes other people guess who they are or what they believe. When I was looking at variance it also means someone who argues or debates. This person prides himself on his balanced mind and his ability to see every subject from a dozen different perspectives.

The only problem with this is the person's only real conviction is that they have no conviction. They pride themselves on the contradictions in their life and are amused by juxtaposition.

This is a person who is double-minded and unstable in all their ways. Even though they profess to be a Christian their best friends are unbelievers or other compromising Christians.

The other word which stood out to me is "emulations". The biblical definition of this is the old English definition, and not the modern word "emulation", which has a positive sense to it.

The old English sense of this word is competitiveness. It is an attitude of wanting to be equal or better than other people. We can see this attitude easily in the attitudes and words of the early disciples of Christ before the resurrection. They often would argue or quarrel among themselves as to who was the greatest among them.

This attitude gives ground for the enemy to set a person up for prestige, position, and pride.

The fruit of the Spirit which has always stood out to me as lacking in my life is gentleness. At one point I went through the Bible and studied every verse in the Bible on gentleness. I studied and meditated on it for a long time so I could become a gentle person. At that time I do think I grew somewhat in this quality of gentleness, but any ground I gained was lost after ten years of working in the technology career field.

I am just now, as I write this, seeing the need for gentleness all over again in my life. I'm not sure why I have such a harsh edge to my demeanor, attitudes, and words. I pray the Lord helps me to show forth this fruit of the Spirit which is gentleness.

Paul gives us a clear picture of the contrast between walking in the flesh and waking in the Spirit.

The path to freedom from the flesh lies in the cross. Paul says here those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its lusts and affections.

The way we must overcome the flesh is to walk in the Spirit. The way to walk in the Spirit is to first enter into God's rest. We must sit down in the heavens with Christ. We need a full understanding of all Christ accomplished in his finished work. Once we understand, then we stand in this by faith. We do not seek out systems, traditions, programs or steps. No, we simply learn to abide in the finished work of Christ. As we remain in this, we become one with Christ. Each passing day we become more and more

one with Jesus in spirit. Our spirits are united. We fellowship and commune with Christ. This relationship with Jesus changes us from the inside out. Inevitably the flesh loses its power over us and we begin to bear the fruit of the Holy Spirit. Our will must be broken so that we become united with him in goal, purpose, and objective.

[16] Fellowship with Christ

Paul wrote he wanted to know Christ and the fellowship of his sufferings and the power of his resurrection.

To have this fellowship with Christ requires agreement. We must start out agreeing with God that we are sinners and deserve the fire of hell. When we see this and agree with God then the next thing is we agree with God's method of salvation.

Many people can see there is a problem in their lives. They twist and turn to all kinds of suggested self help, but nothing ever seems to really work. The reason why systems do not work is because it relies upon the person with the problem to work at it. This is like telling a man with no arms to put on a tie, or like telling a man who cannot see to read a book. People cannot understand the futility of their systems because of their own pride and arrogance.

It is not enough to realize a problem exists. We also must be willing to submit to God's method of fixing the problem.

God's answer to this problem is always Christ himself. The Lord Jesus is a real person, and he is the answer to our problem. His work at Calvary made the way for us to be forgiven of sins, delivered from self, sin, the world, and the devil.

The way to be an overcomer is to touch the Lord himself every day. We cannot rely on the faith of yesterday, the prayer of yesterday. We must continue with Christ every day. We must lay aside every weight and the sin which so easily besets us. Let us keep looking unto Jesus the author and the finisher of our faith.

We are made to fellowship and to commune with the Lord. It is the Lord's pleasure to spend time with his children. One day we will make our eternal home with him. The Lord will tabernacle with us.

Revelation 21:3, "Behold the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God."

Right now we are standing at the cusp of the kingdom. The Lord Jesus is returning as a thief in the night to carry away his bride to the marriage supper of the Lamb. After this we will return with him to take over this planet and we will reign and rule with Jesus for a thousand years. During this time the Lord will also call out another overcoming remnant out of the nations. At the end of the thousand years Satan will be released and he will rally all of the unbelievers on the planet in his final assault upon Jesus and Jerusalem. He will fail again. This time God himself will bring an end to all of this with

fire. Stan and all unbelievers are cast into the lake of fire. God will then create a new heavens and a new earth wherein dwells righteousness. If you would like to read about all this check out the last several chapters of the book of Revelation.

Are we ready? Are we watching and praying, living an overcoming Christian life? Let us occupy until he returns! It won't be long now until the Lord returns to receive us unto himself that where is we may be also. Amen.

1 Thessalonians 4:17, *“Then we which are **alive and remain** shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.”*

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